

Greens call out government on failure to take responsibility for Covid-safe Christmas



18 December 2020

The Green Party is accusing the government today of shirking its responsibilities by pushing Covid Christmas decisions onto individuals.

Rather than be clear and science-led, the government is ploughing on with Christmas rules that risk a further spate of infections in January, leaving people with impossible choices to make.

Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley said: "In homes up and down the country there are anxious conversations going on about what to do over Christmas, now just a week away. People are desperate to see their loved ones but they also understand that the rules the government has chosen to impose will not keep us safe. Rather than prioritising public health, ministers have been goaded by their backbenchers into a position that risks another surge in cases and deaths in the new year.

"What's needed is a clear sense that the government is taking responsibility for controlling the virus so that we can know that we are doing the right thing and keeping our families and communities safe – we just don't have that at the moment. Instead there is confusion and apprehension.

"Covid has exposed the inequalities and weaknesses in our society, which result from 30 years of offloading political responsibilities onto individuals and businesses. From inadequate social housing and over-stretched hospitals to a welfare safety-net that is full of holes and levels of air pollution that are killing children, this is all part of a pattern of neglect and abdication of responsibility.

"Covid has taught us this year the importance of community, collaboration, working together to find solutions – we need to see that reflected in the

behaviour of our politicians too. Only then will we be able to make the kind of progress that's urgently needed on the climate crisis, and avoid ending up in messes like the one we're currently living through with Brexit."

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["History has been made today": Greens respond to coroner's air pollution ruling](#)



16 December 2020

A coroner has today ruled that air pollution was a cause of the death of nine-year-old Ella Kissi-Debrah. [1]

Responding to the ruling, Sian Berry, Green Party co-leader and Mayor of London candidate, said:

"History has been made today, and we can finally see a measure of justice for Ella and for her mother Rosamund, who had fought so bravely to bring this case.

"Now we must see emergency action from all levels of Government: the Prime Minister, the Mayor and every local council, to eliminate the sources of deadly air pollution."

Caroline Russell, Green Party transport spokesperson and London Assembly member, said:

“We have the tools to clean up our air, and every level of Government must use every single one of them, to save lives in the future.

“In London, this means expanding the ULEZ to the M25, and making our streets safer and more accessible so walking and cycling are the most convenient ways to get around. In the end, we must cut the overall number of miles driven. This means a smart fair system of road charging by the mile and according to engine emissions.

“Traffic clogged roads are not inevitable. Since the pandemic, the square mile of the City of London has been almost completely car free, with thousands of daily deliveries made on foot and by cargo bike. If we can do it there, we can do it anywhere we find toxic levels of pollution.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/dec/16/girls-death-contributed-to-by-air-pollution-coroner-rules-in-landmark-case>

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[Caroline Lucas: Heathrow court decision “takes us backwards” in climate response](#)



16 December 2020

Heathrow Airport has won a Supreme Court challenge over the Government's decision to give the go-ahead for a third runway.

Green Party MP Caroline Lucas said:

"This is incredibly disappointing news and takes us backwards in our response to the climate crisis. Commercial interests have won out over the protection of our planet and the wellbeing of future generations.

"But it is not the end of the campaign and Heathrow's plans will be opposed at every step of the planning process to stop this very damaging project which remains incompatible with the UK's obligations under the Paris Agreement.

"The CCC has recommended that there be no increase in overall airport capacity in their pathway to reach net zero by 2050. With most flights [taken by a handful of people](#), we should be introducing frequent flyer levies, not expanding airports which would benefit a few and cost us all dearly.

"The Government must urgently ensure that all its policy making – whether on airports or roads – supports the goals of the Paris Agreement rather than putting them way out of reach."

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**Government's Energy White Paper:
Greens "waiting to see colour of the
money" before welcoming**



14 December 2020

The Green Party has warned that the UK government's energy white paper published today [1] goes "nowhere near far enough" to tackle the climate emergency.

Green Party energy spokesperson Andrew Cooper said:

"It is welcome that the government does appear to be catching up with what we have known for a long time, that we need to transform our whole industrial and transport systems and not just our electricity generation industry.

"Yet this white paper still goes nowhere near far enough and pales into insignificance when compared with the €1trn EU Green Deal and President-elect Biden's commitment to invest \$2trn. We need to see the colour of the government's money before celebrating their plans for a greener future.

"From what we have seen so far, there is no clear commitment to an adequate level of investment and 220,000 jobs is nothing like the scale of ambition we need to see

"The commitment to rapidly develop the UK's world-leading offshore wind resources is also very welcome but the suggestion of diverting resources towards new nuclear simply makes no sense at a time when the costs of renewables is plummeting.

"There is also real inconsistency in the government promising to take fossil fuel vehicles off the road, while investing £27 billion in the largest ever road-building programme.

"The Green Party's proposal of a carbon tax of up to £100 per tonne of carbon rising to £500 by 2030 is the most efficient and effective way to drive fossil fuels out of the economy.

"It's clear that the government are moving in the right direction, and this white paper does appear to be another step that way, but they still fail to grasp the scale of what needs to happen and are moving far too slowly."

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-sets-out-plans-for-clean-energy-system-and-green-jobs-boom-to-build-back-greener>

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Five years from Paris: Greens in COP warning to host Governments



12 December 2020

Elected Greens across the UK have challenged the UK and Scottish Governments to play more of a leadership role at the COP26 climate conference in Glasgow, if it is to become a successful platform for global change.

Marking five years since the signing of the Paris Agreement in 2015, which saw 196 countries agree to keep the increase in global average temperature to well below 2 degrees Celsius, Green representatives have warned that as hosts UK and Scotland must bring more to the table than targets.

A UN report this week revealed the world is on track for an average temperature rise of 3 degrees Celsius. [1]

Both the UK and Scottish Governments have set targets to reduce emissions without committing to the actions to urgently meet them.

In a joint statement [2], Greens have called for the UK to follow Denmark and

others to stop exploration for new oil and gas and to make sure countries in the global south, who contribute least to but are most impacted by the climate breakdown, are both heard and supported at the talks.

Commenting, Green MP Caroline Lucas said: "If COP26 is to be a success, and it has to be, the Government cannot just wing it. It has to start showing the essential leadership role that the French played in the run-up to Paris, and that means not just setting climate targets, but introducing the policies and climate action needed to start delivering on them.

"And it must reverse the decision to cut the international aid budget at a time when those least responsible for climate breakdown are facing the worst impacts in the form of more severe droughts, flooding and food insecurity."

Scottish Greens co-leader Patrick Harvie MSP, who represents Glasgow, said: "The COP summit in Glasgow is an enormous opportunity to bring new impetus to the global push to ensure our survival. And with a change of leadership in the United States, we have fresh hope that we can address the fact that the last four years have not seen the action required by Governments.

"As host nations, the Scottish and UK Governments must bring more than targets to the table if this conference is going to be a success. They must wake up to the need to transition from fossil fuels and end their obsession with expansion of roads and air travel."

Northern Irish Greens leader and MLA Clare Bailey said: "Denmark is the latest country to end exploration for new oil and gas. It's time for the UK to show leadership on this and do the same before COP26. Meanwhile, the Northern Ireland Executive must introduce climate change legislation and legislated climate targets as a matter of urgency."

The statement has been signed by the Scottish Green MSPs, Green Party of England and Wales MP Caroline Lucas and peers Natalie Bennett and Jenny Jones, and Green members of the Northern Irish assembly Clare Bailey and Rachel Woods.

ENDS

Notes

1

https://www.reuters.com/article/climate-change-emissions-idUKKBN28J16B?taid=5fd0d4e7f0e12b00013d9a24&utm_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm_medium=trueAnthem&utm_source=twitter

2

Joint statement sent to all UK Governments:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/ldlMJh8iYv7ve625-7xN5yNahEuXjM7fL/view?usp=sharing>

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